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Joseph A. O. Yeoman

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## NOTABLE DEATHS.

HENRY O'CONNOR was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1820; he died at the Soldiers' Home, Marshalltown, Iowa, November 6, 1900. We have no record of his early life. He came to this country at the age of 20, stopping in New York City, where he learned the tailor's trade, at which he worked several years. During this time he studied law and was admitted to the bar in May, 1849, in which year he came to Iowa and settled in Muscatine. He was a popular and most eloquent speaker and soon became well known throughout the State. At first an Anti-Slavery Whig, he naturally went into the Republican party upon its organization. He was a candidate for presidential elector and supported Gen. Winfield Scott for president in 1852. He was also nominated for the same place in 1856 as a Republican, supporting John C. Fremont. In 1858 he was elected district attorney, in which office he remained until the outbreak of the Civil War. He enlisted as a private in Co. A, First Iowa Infantry, with which he marched down into Missouri. He bore his part in the battle of Wilson's Creek, where Gen. Lyon was killed. In many of the towns receptions were given to the regiment, upon which occasions the duty of responding to speeches of welcome devolved upon "Private O'Connor." It was also jocosely reported that his musket "kicked" so severely that it faced him half-way around into the position of "load!" When the regiment was mustered out he was the best-known man in it. Upon his return, Gov. Kirkwood appointed him Major of the Thirty-fifth Iowa Infantry. He served in this command until the close of the war. In 1866 he was elected attorney-general of the State, and re-elected two years later. In 1868 a memorable case arose in Mitchell county which was referred to him for his opinion. A woman was elected county superintendent of schools whose qualifications were questioned on account of her sex. Attorney General O'Connor decided that in Iowa women were equally eligible with men to any office except that of member of the legislature. This decision settled the question for the time, but it was made the subject of legislation later on. It was one of the events of his career of which he was always proud. Some years later he was appointed solicitor of the State Department at Washington, from which position he retired upon the election of President Cleveland. This was his last official service, except that when far advanced in life he was two or three times chosen to some subordinate office in connection with the State legislature. The manuscripts of his opinions fill many folio volumes in the State Department at Washington. Major O'Connor was a typical Irishman, impulsive, genial, courteous, warm-hearted, a man of many friends, with few or no enemies, a brave, self-sacrificing soldier in the nation's time of need, a lawyer of ability and learning.

CAPT. JOSEPH A. O. YEOMAN was born at Washington Court House, Ohio, in 1842, where he lived until the breaking out of the Civil War, when he entered the 1st Ohio cavalry as a private. He served throughout the war, quitting the service with the rank of Captain. Speaking of his military service the *Fort Dodge Messenger*, of November 20, says: "Captain Yeoman's war record is a brilliant one. He was a dashing army officer, shrewd in plans and daring in action; a typical cavalryman in a war in which cavalry reached a height of effectiveness seldom seen. His chief reputation is linked with the capture of Jefferson Davis, in which he bore no inconsiderable part. He was detached with a party of twenty picked men in the disguise of rebel soldiers, to endeavor to secure news of Davis, and after hard riding and numberless adventures succeeded in joining the escort which was accompanying the rebel president. Captain Yeoman's plan was to capture Mr. Davis by a sudden attack, but he was prevented by the

watchfulness of the Confederate escort, but he succeeded in sending news to the Federal forces of Davis' movements, which ultimately resulted in his capture. In recognition of his services, Captain Yeoman, by special act of Congress, together with three other officers, was voted \$3,000 of a grant of \$100,000 made by Congress to signify the gratitude of the country to those who were instrumental in capturing the President of the Confederacy, the remaining \$88,000 being divided among the enlisted men. He also received special mention as the only officer who had actually risked his life in the capture." On being mustered out of the service Captain Yeoman entered the Albany law school from which he graduated and was admitted to the bar in 1867. He immediately came west and settled in Fort Dodge where he continued in the practice of law until the time of his death. As a lawyer Captain Yeoman was regarded as one of the most aggressive, forceful and able advocates in the northwestern part of the State. He was known as a fighter, always entering into his cases with terrible earnestness. When any case absorbed his interest he pushed it on to a conclusion regardless of cost, and often at his own expense. He was attorney in several famous cases, notably *Boies vs. Allen* and in the Olsen case. In politics Captain Yeoman was a Democrat. In 1879 he was nominated by the Democrats for Lieutenant-Governor. In 1888 he was the opponent of Hon. J. P. Dolliver for Congress and in the campaign held a series of joint debates which will long be remembered in the Tenth district. On the election of Grover Cleveland he was a prominent candidate for District Attorney for northern Iowa, though unsuccessful. He died at Washington Court House, Ohio, Saturday, November 17, 1900, while on a visit at his old home.

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JOHN BRENNAN, the Irish orator and editor, was suddenly stricken dead at his home in Sioux City on October 5, 1900, at the age of fifty-five. His death removes an interesting and romantic figure from Iowa life and from a very large circle of friends and admirers. Mr. Brennan was born in Ireland, in Elphin, county of Roscommon, July 14, 1845. He was the son of a butcher, and was educated at the national schools in his native town, living with his parents until 1865, when he came to the United States. Here he pursued various occupations, working at any labor that presented itself, being a farm hand, porter, railroad grader and teamster, during the first four years of his sojourn in America. In 1867, while working for A. J. Poppleton, a leading lawyer of Omaha, he took up the study of law and was soon admitted to the bar. He was a powerful advocate before a jury, but in a short time was compelled to abandon the profession because of defective hearing. In 1869 he became a reporter for the *Sioux City Daily Times*, which position he filled five years. In 1875 he was elected Justice of the Peace, and later was a member of the city council and city attorney. Mr. Brennan's chief reputation rested on his remarkable oratorical powers. Although a facile and effective writer, he was most effective on the platform, especially when dealing with England's treatment of Ireland. So effective was he as a campaign orator that in the celebrated speaking tour of James G. Blaine, in 1884, Mr. Brennan accompanied him in his campaign through the east. During the agitation in this country for the aid of Ireland in the home rule struggle, Mr. Brennan was closely allied with Patrick Egan and John P. Finnerty, taking an important part in the national gatherings of the Irish leaders. In religious matters he was a devout Catholic, during his later years devoting his energies to editorial work on *The Northwestern Catholic*, published at Sioux City.

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MORTIMER A. HIGLEY was born in Hartford, Connecticut, April 18, 1838; he died at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, October 30, 1900. He came to Linn county with his parents in 1842. After quitting school he entered the service

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